



News Release

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SBA Honors Outstanding Disaster Recovery Efforts

WASHINGTON – The owners of a Maryland restaurant nearly destroyed after Hurricane Isabel, the director of Montana’s Disaster and Emergency Services, an Ohio company that suffered millions of dollars in losses after a flood, and two volunteers who collected and distributed donations for Pennsylvania flood victims will be presented with the Phoenix Award today during the U.S. Small Business Administration’s *SBA Expo ‘05: Celebrating National Small Business Week*, the agency’s three-day conference in Washington.

The awards will be presented during a 7 p.m. reception at the National Air & Space Museum.

“During times of crisis these individuals displayed selflessness and courage, and made remarkable contributions to the recovery of their communities,” said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. “The Phoenix Award is SBA’s acknowledgement of their heroic efforts.”

James Anderson, President & CEO of Republic Storage Systems Company, will receive the Phoenix Award for ***Small Business Disaster Recovery***. The Republic Storage Systems plant in Canton, Ohio, was inundated by flood waters following a major storm in July, 2003. When the company, which manufactures shelving and storage lockers completed damage estimates it had losses of \$11 million. After it demonstrated it was a major source of employment in Canton, the SBA approved a \$5.9 million disaster loan. Republic’s tenacity in overcoming financial hardship and physical losses allowed for the rehiring of 500 employees and a quick resumption of normal production.

John & Rayetta Price will also receive a Phoenix Award for ***Small Business Disaster Recovery***. The storm surge from Hurricane Isabel in September 2003 filled Skipper's Pier Restaurant in Deale, Maryland, with three feet of water, leaving debris in the restaurant's parking lot. A few weeks later the entire foundation of the restaurant collapsed. The Prices worried about continuing to pay their employees while rebuilding the entire lower dining room and pavilion. After receiving an SBA disaster loan they were able to renovate the property, keep their 38 employees and reopen seven months later.

Dan W. McGowan, the winner of the Phoenix Award for ***Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Public Official***, is being acknowledged for his extraordinary leadership and dedication as Administrator of Montana’s Disaster and Emergency Services agency. When wildfires threatened to destroy many homes and businesses in July 2003, McGowan not only secured a federal disaster declaration, but set up town hall meetings in various parts of the state to get the word out about the SBA disaster loan program.

He tirelessly coordinated with local Chambers of Commerce and business owners, who provided meeting places for the SBA information sessions. McGowan's efforts made it possible for many businesses to survive the economic disaster caused by the fires.

Beth Sieminski and Dawn Wyble will receive the Phoenix Award for *Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by Private Citizens*. After severe flooding struck Tarentum, Pennsylvania, last September, Sieminski and Wyble started their own small-scale relief effort, collecting and distributing donated household items to flood victims. They later enlisted the aid of a trucking company, which loaned three trailers to store the donations. The local media got involved, and the pair were deluged with donations of food and cleaning supplies. In the weeks that followed, Beth and Dawn helped nearly 350 families, delivering food, clothing and toiletries to Tarentum disaster victims.

Since 1998, the SBA has presented the Phoenix Awards to business owners and individuals who displayed courage, resourcefulness and tenacity in the aftermath of a disaster, while contributing to the rebuilding of their communities.

The SBA makes low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters, and non-farm businesses of all sizes. Homeowners may borrow up to \$200,000 to repair disaster damaged residences. Homeowners and renters are eligible for loans of up to \$40,000 to replace personal property. Loans of up to \$1.5 million are available to businesses of all sizes and non-profit organizations to repair damage to real estate, machinery and inventory. Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$1.5 million are available to small businesses unable to pay bills or meet operating expenses.

In the aftermath of four devastating hurricanes last summer that struck Florida, 14 other states and Puerto Rico, the SBA quickly mobilized more than 1,500 disaster employees who were sent to work in 76 recovery centers in the affected areas. So far SBA has approved more than \$2 billion in disaster loans for 62,000 homeowners, renters and businesses.

To find out more about the SBA's disaster assistance program, visit the Web site at www.sba.gov/disaster.

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